

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAO PAULO 1480

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BR
SUBJ: VIEWS OF FORMER GOVERNOR ABREU SODRE ON SAO PAULO STATE
POLITICS

REF: A) SAO PAULO 1479 B) BRASILIA 3922

1. SUMMARY: SODRE IS THE COORDINATOR OF THE DISSIDENT CANDIDACY OF SAO PAULO CITY COUNCILMAN AND FORMER MUNICIPAL SECRETARY OF JUSTICE SAMPAIO DORIA. HE EXPECTS THAT THREE CANDIDATES WILL TRY FOR THE SAO PAULO GUBERNATORIAL NOMINATION: FORMER GOVERNOR LAUDO NATEL, THE OFFICIAL CANDIDATE, FORMER SAO PAULO MAYOR PAULO SALIM MALUF, AND SAMPAIO DORIA. SODRE BELIEVES THAT THE CONVENTION DELEGATES WHO RESENT HAVING NATEL FORCED ON THEM ARE IN THE MAJORITY. HE STATED THAT THERE ARE "NATURAL AFFINITIES" BETWEEN THE MOVEMENT TO RUN A DISSIDENT GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE IN SAO PAULO AND THE POSSIBLE EMERGENCE OF A MILITARY CANDIDATE TO OPPOSE GENERAL FIGUEIREDO, BUT THAT THE TWO MOVEMENTS WERE NOT COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS. SEE REFTEL A FOR SODRE'S VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. FORMER GOVERNOR ABREU SODRE, COORDINATOR FOR THE DISSIDENT GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDACY OF SAMPAIO DORIA, TOLD CONGENOFF MAY 18
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THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE THREE CANDIDATES PRESENTED TO THE SAO PAULO STATE ARENA NOMINATING CONVENTION, SET FOR JUNE 3-4. THEY ARE FORMER GOVERNOR LAUDO NATEL, THE OFFICIAL CANDIDATE, FORMER SAO PAULO MAYOR PAULO SALIM MALUF AND SAO PAULO CITY COUNCILMAN AND FORMER MUNICIPAL SECRETARY OF JUSTICE SAMPAIO DORIA. SODRE CHARACTERIZED MALUF AS A MVERICK CANDIDATE, WHO COULD BE PUT OUT OF THE RACE AT ANY MOMENT IF THE FEDERAL

GOVERNMENT CHOSE TO PRESS LEGAL ACTION AGAINST HIM. (COMMENT: MALUF IS BEING INVESTIGATED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCANDAL OVER THE BANKRUPT LUTFALLA TEXTILE FIRM. IT IS OWNED BY HIS WIFE'S FAMILY AND HIS WIFE. MALUF OBTAINED MAJOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK LOANS FOR THE FAILING FIRM THROUGH PLANNING MINISTER REIS VELLOSO, EVEN THROUGH THE BANK OPPOSED THE ACTION.) SODRE SAID THAT MALUF KNOWS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT MOVE AGAINST HIM AS LONG AS HE APPEARS TO BE SPLITTING THE OPPOSITION, BUT SODRE HINTED THAT MALUF HAS AGREED TO BARGAIN WITH THE SAMPAIO DORIA DISSIDENTS AT THE CONVENTION.

3. SODRE SAID THAT HE DECIDED TO BACK SAMPAIO DORIA WHEN HE VERIFIED THAT OPPOSITION TO NATEL WAS SO GREAT THAT MALUF HAD A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING ON THE FIRST BALLOT. SINCE HE ANNOUNCED THE POSSIBILITY OF SAMPAIO DORIA'S CANDIDACY, SODRE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED "LITERALLY HUNDREDS" OF TELEPHONE CALLS FROM MAYORS PLEDGING THEIR SUPPORT. SODRE SAID THAT GOVERNOR PAULO EGYDIO AND MOST OF HIS SUPPORTERS AND PROMINENT DISSIDENT SEVERO GOMES ALSO SUPPORT DORIA. (COMMENT: THE GOVERNOR, HOWEVER, TOLD CONGEN AND EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT HE WAS NOT AND WOULD NOT SUPPORT ANY CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR, BUT HE WAS EVIDENTLY FUMING OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH HIS FRIEND PRESIDENT GEISEL HAD IMPOSED LAUDO NATEL'S CANDIDACY ON HIM.)

4. SODRE SAID HE WAS WAITING FOR THE BILL TO PASS CONGRESS REGULATING PARTY NOMINATIONS IN ORDER TO LAUNCH OFFICIALLY
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SAMPAIO DORIA'S NOMINATION. (COMMENT: AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING CONVENTION, THE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED A BILL TO REGULATE THE GUBERNATORIAL NOMINATION PROCESS. CANDIDATES INITIALLY WERE TO BE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN SIGNATURES OF 10 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES IN ORDER TO HAVE THEIR NAME INTRODUCED AT THE CONVENTION. AS THE DISSIDENT CANDIDACY IN SAO PAULO GAINED SUPPORT, THE GOVERNMENT MAJORITY CHANGED THE REQUIREMENT TO 20 PERCENT IN THE DRAFT BILL. THE BILL IS SCHEDULED TO BE APPROVED IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.) SODRE SAID THAT THE CURRENT CONVENTION RULES REQUIRE A CANDIDATE TO OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY ON THE FIRST OR SECOND BALLOTS, BUT ONLY A PLURALITY ON THE THIRD BALLOT. SODRE STATED THAT HE WAS WATCHING CAREFULLY FOR ANY FURTHER ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE CONVENTION RULES.

5. COMMENT: SAMPAIO DORIA IS AN ATTRACTIVE 33 YEAR OLD ARENA POLITICIAN WHO HAS TWICE BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE SAO PAULO CITY COUNCIL. HE IS ARTICULATE, AN EFFECTIVE VOTE GETTER, FREE OF SCANDAL AND NOT ALIGNED WITH ECONOMIC GROUPS. MOST OF ALL, HE IS A NEW FACE ON THE SAO PAULO POLITICAL SCENE, A POLITICAL LEADER WHO SUPPORTS THE REVOLUTION BUT WHO STANDS FOR CHANGE. DORIA'S LIABILITIES ARE THAT HE IS STILL RELATIVELY UNKNOWN, ESPECIALLY IN THE INTERIOR OF THE STATE. THERE IS ALSO SOME QUESTIONING ABOUT

WHETHER HE IS EXPERIENCED ENOUGH FOR THE GOVERNORSHIP.
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